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## CONTEMPORARY FIGURE PAINTERS



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A. L. BALDRY



Plate 14 missing Books.

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### INTRODUCTION

N all art that has any real measure of vitality there must be inevitably a reflection of the conditions under which it has been produced. It must have a certain degree of local character due partly to the racial characteristics of the people to whom the artists belong and partly to the physical and social surroundings in which these artists

live. Many people are very ready to argue that there is no such thing as nationality in art, but this is really a fallacy. Outside influences may and, indeed, very often do modify an artist's manner of expression and induce him to adopt methods of practice which are more or less unlike those generally used by his fellows, but the departure he makes from the traditions of his country is only superficial and his art remains in its main essentials fully subject to those traditions.

This is seen plainly enough in the case of a student who goes abroad for his training. If he is sufficiently receptive he will acquire readily the mannerisms and the tricks of technique which are accepted as a matter of course in the school to which he has been admitted; he may even absorb something of the atmosphere of the place in which he finds himself; but when he comes home again he quickly sheds his foreign disguise and reverts to the habits of thought and practice which are natural to him by birth and upbringing. At the most, he retains only the manual methods which he has learned abroad, the mechanism by which he has been taught to express his ideas; but almost immediately he returns to the mental outlook which is his by inheritance and which he shares with his fellow-countrymen.

There is nothing surprising in such a reversion for, after all, each nation has its particular attitude of mind and its general community of temperament, and all nations differ among themselves in their manner of regarding the various problems of life. So it is reasonable to expect the art of one country to have aims and traditions unlike those which prevail in another, and it is not less reasonable to assume that the artists in these countries will in their work make evident this unlikeness because they derive, each one of them, their inspiration from the national sentiment to which they are accustomed. A foreign training may give an artist wider vision and more breadth of mind, but it does not alter his temperament or destroy his racial characteristics.

Perhaps the best proof that nationality is a very real fact in art is to be found in the way that different countries deal with questions of artistic policy that are common to them all. During the last few years the whole art world has been in a state of agitation and afflicted by a spirit of restlessness; everywhere there has been evidence of unsettled

convictions and a desire for change. New movements have been started, strange experiments have been made, conventions long accepted have been thrown aside as obsolete, and violent departures from established custom have been advocated and attempted. Art has, in fact, been going through a sort of revolution in which, though there has been much that must be dismissed as intemperate and ill-considered, there has been something significant and not without value.

For it is well that artists should from time to time take stock of their position and ask themselves whether or not they are keeping in touch with the spirit of their age. If they do not respond to the movements in the world about them there is always the danger that their work will get out of date and lose both its vitality and its power to appeal, and if they do not follow the developments in public opinion as generation succeeds to generation they run the risk of becoming stereotyped

and useless survivals from the past.

It is, no doubt, because of late the popular unrest has been more than ordinarily pronounced that the turmoil in the art world has been so violent. Art was, at first, a little slow to move, and the more excitable advocates of reconstruction and reform felt impelled to hasten its progress so that it might catch up with the new ideas that were being advanced in all directions. So these enthusiasts prescribed drastic remedies for what seemed to them to be a hopeless somnolence and went to excessive lengths in their struggle to get things going again. Perhaps they made themselves a little ridiculous by their vehement disregard for sane tradition and, perhaps, like so many other revolutionaries, they thought more about destroying what they objected to than about building up something that would be safe and permanent. But even their intemperance had its uses, because it stimulated the upholders of tradition to active protest and stirred them to serious efforts to prove that art would move with the times without abandoning its well tested principles.

The most interesting point about this agitation is, however, that it has enabled us to compare varieties of national temperament and to see how characteristically each country has set to work to put its artistic affairs in good order. Nowhere has the demand for progress and reconstruction been ignored, but no two nations have met this demand in quite the same manner or have committed themselves to exactly the same type of reform. There has been certainly some interchange of ideas and there have been instances of a movement in one country producing some degree of sympathetic activity in another, but for the most part the working out of schemes of reconstruction has been along the lines that each of the peoples concerned might have been expected

to follow and has not been marked by any conspicuous departure from local custom.

For example, in a comparatively short time really important changes have been made in the manner and character of British art. There has been no unreadiness on the part of artists in this country to revise their methods and they have not been unwilling to recognise that it was necessary for them to show a full appreciation of the modern spirit. But they have done their reforming quietly and deliberately and in a common-sense way, without exciting themselves unduly about the prescriptions of revolutionary agitators and without paying any very serious attention to the demonstrations of the extremists.

It is true that there has been seen here in recent years a certain amount of work that departed definitely from the normal British tradition, but the bulk of this has come either from foreign artists who, though resident in this country, have retained the outlook of their race, or from young people who in their youthful enthusiasm have been anxious to experiment with new theories or, as is also the manner of youth, to pose as being very original and advanced. This kind of art has not, however, made much headway or gained support from any large section of the British public; it has been taken as a more or less amusing eccentricity, quaint and freakish, but not convincing.

The real advance has been in the direction of a fuller expression of the national sentiment. British art—in fact, all Anglo-Saxon art—has always been of a definitely naturalistic type, concerned less with abstract fancies than with the faithful representation of nature, episodical rather than dramatic, literal rather than suggestive. At its worst it has descended into silly and sickly sentimentality and feeble prettiness, at its best it has risen to a high standard of dignified realism and has been distinguished by true refinement and beauty. By its naturalism, however, it has gained its hold upon the public, because in the Anglo-Saxon mind the worship of nature is instinctive and the appreciation of physical fitness—or, in other words, of physical beauty—is strongly developed.

Therefore in the best of the modern British art the tendency has been towards a robuster statement of actualities and towards a plainer and simpler presentation of the subject-matter selected. The figure painters are drawing their inspiration more and more from the life about them, the portrait painters are aiming at more vigorous characterisation and more exact realisation of the personality of the sitter, the landscape painters are looking more at the big framework of nature and less at the pretty details on which their predecessors were wont to insist. The age has ceased to be sentimental, therefore sentimentality is ruled out; people are more interested in the affairs of the moment than in

reconstructions of the past, therefore the historical picture which pleased our forefathers is no longer attempted; we are all practical and matter of fact, therefore the poetic fantasy which was so popular in less strenuous times is thrown aside. That is the way in which our art has responded to the incitements of the revolutionaries—by changing its outward aspect in sympathy with the change in the mental attitude of the people, but by asserting, in so doing, its fidelity to tradition.

Among the Latin races there is much less stability of conviction; temperamentally they are far more emotional and far more responsive to sudden impressions. Their tendency is to shift abruptly from one standpoint to another and to deal in startling contrasts. They are always ready for experiment, and they derive a great deal of pleasure from what would seem to us rather disconcerting departures from the beaten track. Consequently, they have seen in the unrest in the art world an opportunity not so much for revising and bringing up to date established traditions as for a spectacular excursion into new fields of practice. Their idea of a revolution is a real reversal of precedent, a denial of the authority of the past and the creation of sets of conditions as different as possible from anything that has been accepted before; and in applying this idea to the development of their art they have arrived at results which are undeniably surprising.

In France, particularly, experiment has of late run riot. Some half century ago impressionism, with its scientific dissection of effects of illumination and its arbitrary system of colour treatment, was regarded as the most far-reaching reform possible and as the starting-point of an entirely new phase of art. It was supposed to have effaced the records of the past and to have fixed immutably the direction in which all the effort of the future must tend. Yet, to-day, impressionism is counted among the obsolete movements, as a mere matter of dead history, and in its place there have been set up a number of strange creeds, each one of which claims to be an inspired revelation destined to convert the

whole of mankind.

These creeds have in common one idea, the denial of naturalism. They do not admit that the study of nature is desirable, or, at all events, any study of nature that implies the faithful and accurate recording of realities. In the representation of the human subject absolute freedom to distort the natural form is demanded, and considerations of pattern making and of supposedly decorative design are held to absolve the artist from any obligation to attend to the physical facts that are actually set before him. His work has to be an expression of a mental abstraction, a personal problem which he thinks out for himself and of which he alone knows the solution—to rely upon nature for guidance, or to

confess to anything more than a remote acquaintance with her, would be against his principles because there would then be a suggestion that he was wanting in independence and in the power to visualise the

promptings of his imagination.

Theoretically, this craving for freedom and for the removal of all interference with self-expression is a worthy and reasonable aspiration, but in France, and to some extent in Italy and Spain as well, it has only created a fresh crop of conventions and has multiplied experiments which do not promise to lead anywhere in particular—that, as far as can be judged at present, has been its practical result. Of course, the occasional genius may break away from rules and take successfully a line of his own, but the mediocre artist is inevitably a follower and attaches himself instinctively to some group of men who support the fashion to which he inclines.

Latin art, then, has become a matter of groups, each one of which has its own formula and its own idea about what constitutes real progress. There are still in its ranks artists who have not joined the agitators and who are faithful to the old ideals, but they are much less in evidence than the men of the new schools who scout these ideals as pedantic absurdities and substitute loose and irresponsible technical methods for the scholarly precision of their predecessors. How things will ultimately evolve it is at the moment impossible to foresee; when the unexpectedness of the Latin temperament is taken into account it would seem that

almost anything might happen.

The Scandinavian peoples being more or less akin to the Anglo-Saxon are exempt from the Latin excitability, and therefore what changes there may have been in their art have not led to any very obvious departures from their habitual practice. Certainly, there has been no perceptible relaxation in their serious observation of nature and no diminution in the sincerity of their technical methods. Their figure painting is, perhaps, more literal than their landscape, more illustrative than romantic; but it has sterling qualities which entitle it to all respect. Russian art at the moment is to a great extent an unknown quantity; it must necessarily be affected by the political conditions of the country, but how these are influencing it now or are likely to influence it in the future there has been little opportunity to judge.

Teutonic art, however, is more accessible, and there is nothing to prevent an examination of its present-day tendencies or to put any difficulties in the way of estimating the value of its contribution to artistic progress. In comparatively recent times it was largely illustrative and the artists chose many of their subjects from past and contemporary history, but frequent excursions were made into a rather

ponderous symbolism that became occasionally a little brutal. Technically this work was sound but it was often lacking in beauty, and it suggested a somewhat grim outlook. Even in motives of a lighter type the treatment was apt to be coarse and the humour, when it appeared, was cynical if not bitter.

In the later developments of this art the movement has been in the direction of increased grimness rather than towards a lighter kind of effort. The German work especially is marked by a gloomy seriousness of manner and seems to be methodical rather than inspired; it reverts frequently to the dry, hard technique of the early German masters, and it does not as a rule suggest that the executant found any pleasure in the manipulation of his materials. Modernism of a decidedly advanced order is also common, but it takes the form not so much of freakish experiment with novel processes as of learned and studied effort to establish a geometrical convention which reduces the representation of the human figure to a merely formal diagram and makes unnecessary any reference to nature.

The unrest in the art world is not confined to Europe, the Eastern nations have felt it as well and have begun to question whether or not their ancient traditions are capable of amendment. They are casting about for new forms of expression, but more in a spirit of enquiry than with any very definite conviction that their art has ceased to reflect the national sentiment. This is, no doubt, due to Western influences, to the closer contact between East and West that has resulted from the modern improvement in means of communication and to the consequent break-

ing in upon the isolation of the Eastern peoples.

But the East moves so slowly that the comparatively short term of years during which it has been able to assimilate ideas from outside has not been long enough to produce a new set of convictions in countries where traditions have been maintained almost unaltered for many centuries. Changes there have been; so far, however, they have affected little more than the surface of Eastern art, and they have been made mainly, it would seem, as a concession to commercial expediency, with an intention to meet and take advantage of a Western demand. Whether underlying them there is a real belief that the time has come for a serious and systematic re-arrangement of artistic principles it is much too soon to say; there are few signs which would justify the assumption that Asia is committed to a scheme of immediate reform.

Still, there is an increasing tendency to experiment with Western ideas and methods, and there is a growing inclination among Eastern students to come for their education to European schools where they learn what is to them an alien art. The experience they gain may

possibly be useful to them—if they have balanced minds it may enable them to make just comparisons between their own art and that of other countries—and it may help them to do work which will be sufficiently modern and yet in correct relation to the spirit of their people. But, on the other hand, it may be merely unsettling and cause them to waste effort upon forms of art with which temperamentally they are not in

sympathy.

Certainly, it would appear to be advisable that countries like India or Japan, which have so much to show that proves the strength and individuality of their traditions, should do the amending of their art from within rather than without, if amendment is required. They are more likely to secure a satisfactory evolution in this way than by grafting on to their native stock exotic additions which would, almost as a matter of course, look out of place. This view is actually taken by not a few of the Eastern artists who have studied European methods; they have learned what the schools had to teach them and have then applied their technical knowledge to the development of a finer and more expressive type of traditional practice to which a modern freedom of handling was the only Western contribution.

It is probable that we in Europe have learned more from Asia than Asia, as yet, has learned from us. Japanese art has decidedly influenced a good many of the Western painters and designers, and when they have taken the trouble to study its principles rather than its purely superficial peculiarities the influence has been of some value. Even the formalities of Indian and Persian art have found imitators here and have been used as the foundation for some of the newer schemes of picture making, undeniably in a foolish way at times but on occasions with an appreciable degree of intelligence. On the whole, however, the interchange of ideas between East and West has not been of any great advantage to either, and it seems better that the two should retain their differences of artistic conviction than that they should try to make up a hybrid art which would be in the nature of a compromise between two widely divergent schools of thought.

For, in this instance, the racial distinctions are much more strongly accentuated than those which cause variations in opinion and dissimilarities of practice among the Western nations. Their effect is seen most plainly of all in the manner of dealing pictorially with the human figure that is adopted in these two parts of the world—in the East the representation of humanity is almost wholly conventional and subject to certain rules of design which allow little scope for the intimate observation of realities; in the West the actual physical personality of the subject is studied with serious attention and is treated as not only worthy

of artistic consideration but also as the chief matter for representation. Our habit of mind leads us instinctively towards naturalism, and that it is which prevents us from being seriously affected by our dallyings with arts that are strange to us in principle and opposed to our conventions

in methods of interpretation.

This is the habit of mind, too, that makes improbable any radical change in Western art so long as it retains vitality enough to express itself in accordance with the spirit of its place of origin. Experiments there will be, and they will vary both in purpose and result in agreement with the prevailing sentiment of the country in which they are made. But there is little likelihood that any of them will produce an art different in its real essentials from that which each country has by regular stages evolved to meet the demand of its people, and it is even less likely that either Europe or America will abandon their traditions under any impulse from outside. Only a revolution strong enough to destroy everything that has been built up through centuries of consistent progress could so weaken the national idea of art that the artists would find themselves adrift and ready to clutch at any straw that would, they imagined, support them. Then, perhaps, there might be wild excursions all around in the hope that somewhere or other a little solid ground might be discovered on which an art with some elements of popularity could be built. But the present-day symptoms scarcely suggest the possibility of such an eruption.

#### THE ILLUSTRATIONS

It would be no small undertaking to compile a book which would deal fully with all the modern varieties of figure painting and with the work of the many artists who in this branch of production have done things worthy of attention. The ground to be covered is so exceedingly wide and the material available is so ample that the task of reducing it to order would be almost overpowering. Moreover, such a number of complications have been introduced of late years by the experimental digressions that have been made—digressions which have still to prove themselves capable of permanent results—that the moment is hardly suitable for an exhaustive treatment of the subject.

Therefore, in these pages it is intended only to illustrate certain types of achievement which are reasonably characteristic of present-day art and interesting in themselves as adequate examples of personal expression. They are sufficient to make clear the more important points of difference between the chief schools of practice and to show something, at all events, of the way in which each of the nations represented interprets the purpose of artistic effort. They provide, too, contrasts of style and method which are instructive because they put beyond question the possibility of applying technical processes with absolute individuality and yet, at the same time, without any necessity

arising for erratic departures from custom and tradition.

If the illustrations of British work are compared with those derived from other countries it becomes very apparent that they have in common an atmosphere which is distinctive enough and unlike in many respects anything that is seen elsewhere—an atmosphere of solid and seriously studied actuality. Yet these paintings are not only very widely apart in character, but also entirely free from any suggestion that the artists who produced them were influenced by a naturalistic formula to which they all felt themselves bound to subscribe. Each painter has accepted without question naturalism as a fundamental principle, but in the application of that principle has exercised definitely personal discretion.

For example, how different are Mr. Brangwyn's robust and vital "Fisherwomen" and Mr. Glyn Philpot's precise and learned Penelope and the Lovers," one an uncompromising statement of physical facts, the other a subtle fantasy in which the realities of nature are delicately adapted to the purposes of a sort of Pre-Raphaelite design. Or again, how little alike in manner of recording things seen are "The Lemnians "by Mr. Russell Flint, with its vehemence of emotion, and "Madame Suggia" by Mr. Augustus John, in which the dramatic quality comes from the realisation of a personality rather than from the working out of an emotional subject. Another comparison can be made between the seductive charm of Mr. de Glehn's "Firelight" and the plain matter of fact of "The Artist's Model" by Mrs. Laura Knight, between the idealised rendering of the female nude as seen by a male painter and the frank fidelity of the woman artist who has no illusions about the beauty of her own sex. Unlike all the others is "The Knacker's Yard" by Sir William Orpen, although it is as typically British as any of them in its Hogarthian character.

If it had been possible to illustrate their work many other artists could have been included whose sincere regard for the tradition of this country has not diminished the individuality of their achievement or restricted the scope of their effort. Mr. Sims with his delightful fertility of imagination and mastery of technical methods, Mr. Tuke with his decisiveness of draughtsmanship and his admirable understanding of the way in which the nude figure should be presented in the

open air, Mr. Spencer Watson with his sense of classical dignity and scholarly refinement of manner, and, going a little further back, an earnest romanticist like J. W. Waterhouse, an inspired painter of rustic life like Edward Stott, and an outstanding master like Sir William Orchardson, can all be quoted as men of sturdy independence and yet as being essentially British in sentiment and practice. The list could be greatly extended without any fear that a wider survey of our native school would reveal among the men who matter any lack of initiative or originality.

Of the other countries which are still mainly faithful to the naturalistic tradition America is, as might have been expected, the chief; the Anglo-Saxon spirit is evident in most of its art. the greatest painter of American origin, J. S. Sargent, had a full measure of this spirit, but he was, it must be admitted, British by residence and association, and unquestionably responded to the influence of his To claim him as a descendant in art from the British surroundings. masters of the eighteenth century would not be unjust, his kinship with such a painter as Raeburn, for instance, is sufficiently close. But, as the picture by him which is reproduced here shows, he brought eighteenth-century art definitely up to date and brilliantly renewed its vitality, adding to it much that was entirely his own. The other picture by an American artist, Mr. Chambers, is a home product which has a particular interest because it was designed for publicity purposes and is an example of the use of pictorial art as an advertising medium.

Yet another picture which has special distinction as a piece of enlightened and accomplished realism is the "Nude" by Anders Zorn, who may fairly be ranked among the great masters that Europe has produced in our time and as a painter who must always occupy a place of especial prominence in the history of art. He owes his position to a rare combination of absolute accuracy of vision and consummate skill in dealing with problems of technical practice. An exceptionally expressive draughtsman and a sensitive colourist he had an almost magical power in representing the life about him, the everyday existence of ordinary people, without making his work either dull or common-In his many studies of the nude figure he did not attempt idealisations or give to his models a conventional beauty, he adhered strictly to nature's facts, but by the certainty of his drawing, the significance of his modelling, and the exquisite quality of his flesh painting, he imparted to these frank exercises an extraordinary dignity. Scandinavia can claim to have possessed in him a supreme exponent of wholesome naturalism. Beside him even so accomplished a painter as Hammershöj, another representative of Scandinavian art, looks a little dry and formal, although, actually, this "Interior" by him is a remarkably expressive study marked both by acuteness of observation and sincerity of interpretation, and admirable in its management of light and shade and relations of tone.

To turn from things of this order to such a picture as Gauguin's "Faa Iheihe" is to take a dramatic step from one world of art to another and to make a complete change of outlook. Gauguin's intention in the creation of this picture was not to accept the guidance of nature and to present her as she would appear to the normally observant eye, but to base quite remotely upon her a decorative convention in which the adjustment of a pattern of lines and colour masses was a matter of much greater moment than the statement of plain facts. He assumed and exercised the right to ignore visible realities, to deal as he pleased with details of form and structure, and to substitute an arbitrary system of design for the less formal arrangements of nature. Whether he could not have arrived at a decoration as effective without departing so violently from traditional technical courses is a question which would admit of argument, but he went his way with deliberate purpose and, therefore, he must be given credit for his consistency.

At any rate, neither Degas in his "Jeunes Spartiates" nor Forain in his "Danseuse et Abonné" found it necessary to go to such lengths in the assertion of their independence, yet both can be accepted as artists of real originality and indisputable power, who had something definite to say and made their artistic points with ample confidence. When pictures like these are compared with the works of some of the greater French painters of the more or less recent past and, as well, with those of the latest exponents of advanced theories—beside whom even Gauguin would look tame and respectable—it is possible to form some idea of the rapidity with which art in France has moved from one phase to another during the last half-century. It is only a short while ago that Degas himself was accounted a revolutionary; to-day he would be numbered with the steady-going and serious supporters of a school which the modern agitators would flout as a survival from the dark ages.

The love of experiment has led France very far away from the elegant artificialities of painters of the Bouguereau type or from the vigorous and unquestioning realism of Bastien Le Page, it has induced a sensational departure from the gentle sentiment of artists like L'hermitte and from the sober mastery of such a great craftsman as Dagnan-Bouveret. Gauguin is acclaimed as a more inspired decorator than Puvis de Chavannes, Matisse as a truer artist than Benjamin Constant. The desire for some new thing has become apparently an impulse beyond control; where it is tending no one can say.

In Italy the same craving is plentifully in evidence, but there are still many figure painters there who are progressive along accustomed lines, and of their work the picture, "Sewing the Sail," by Alessandro Pomi, is a satisfying example. It is free from that niggling insistence upon trivialities of detail—an inheritance, perhaps, from Fortuny—which was until recently one of the worst defects in Italian art, but its decorative simplification has not been carried too far and there is to be perceived in it a real respect for nature. Mancini's "La Douane," too, has no extravagance of manner and its originality is unforced; technically it is an achievement of unusual interest because in it the difficulties of the subject have been overcome with convincing skill and the risk of lapsing into the commonplaces of realism has been cleverly avoided. The picture represents the artist at a period in his career when he had not adopted those freaks of handling which make some of his paintings a little questionable.

The illustration of Russian painting, "La Danseuse," by Savely Sorine, has a certain unexpectedness, for there is in its manner none of that Byzantine suggestion which is popularly supposed to distinguish the art of Russia. It has, indeed, a severity of style and a calm reticence of treatment that are oddly reminiscent of French classicism; Ingres is the master who seems to have influenced him most and to have determined the character of his work. But, whatever may be the origin of his art, there can be no doubt concerning the conscientiousness and scholarly correctness of his performance. His drawing is agreeably precise without being mechanical, and in everything he does there is an air of efficiency which implies accuracy of observation and a habit

of careful analysis.

Léon de Smet's "Russian Ballet" represents sufficiently well the class of art which has been developed in Belgium in response to the stimulus of the modern movement, and "La Novia" by Anglada can be taken as marking the effect of the same movement on the Spanish temperament. Both pictures are significant in their acceptance of conventions which differ from those which were formerly recognised as customary in these countries, and both have points of interest which make them worthy of attention. So, too, has "The Cock Fight" by Roland Strasser, an Austrian artist, who has devoted himself chiefly to study of the life in remote parts of the East. He is not a modernist in the sense that he is occupied with abstractions of technical expression or with the promotion of novel and subversive creeds, but he is thoroughly modern in his desire to choose his own way of depicting his subjects and in his refusal to be bound by the dogma of any particular school.

This picture of his really achieves its success by its insistent naturalism and by its truth as a record of a scene which has been studied with elaborate care. There is no slurring over facts in the manner of its representation; each fact has been assigned its right place in a pictorial scheme which has been conceived as a whole rather than looked at part by part. The details are there, not suggested or implied, but plainly stated; all of them, however, are clearly subordinated to the main motive, and that is the optical effect produced by a crowded mass of humanity seen under conditions of lighting which allow only the most subtle variations of light and shade. The whole thing is a problem in illumination and colour management; it has been solved with notable understanding.

It is the want of this understanding that makes the picture, "Die Fischerin," by the German painter, J. Diez, seem so artificial and inconsequent, built up as it is of strangely assorted odds and ends. It is, however, intended to be a frivolous fantasy without any serious reference to nature, and is designed to form part of a decorative scheme. It is to be taken only as an imaginative exercise. The other German example, "Die Beiden Schwestern," by A. Kampf, is more solidly real and, though, perhaps, more ordinary, is a better illustration of the executive methods generally applied in the country from which it comes.

Both the paintings chosen to represent present-day Eastern art show some measure of Western influence. The fresco, "Medical Herb," by the Japanese artist, Kosugi-Misui, is very definitely a compromise between two schools of practice; there are hints in it that the artist has come into fairly close contact with the works of the Greek masters and that he had them in mind when he designed the pose of the figure and made his arrangement of the draperies; and the facial type he has chosen is not that which belongs to his own people. But his flat tones, his avoidance of contrasts of light and dark, his use of simple and formal pattern, and his conventional treatment of colour are all in accordance with the artistic precedents of his country. On the whole, the compromise is more successful than might have been anticipated, and the picture that has resulted from it is attractive in its unaffected sincerity.

The other Eastern painting, Raagni "Aasaori," is by an Eastern artist, Fyzee Rahamin, who was a pupil of Sargent and might, therefore, have not unnaturally been expected to become wholly westernised. He has, however, applied the knowledge he acquired from his master to the development of traditional Indo-Persian art, retaining its decorative character and its specific style, but bringing into it a strength and subtlety of draughtsmanship which it scarcely possessed before.

His work has real beauty, and in its combination of sureness of touch and refinement of expression it ranks with the best productions of modern times. The effort to revise and reconstruct an ancient art is very well worth while when it is directed by so correct an appreciation of artistic propriety and by so serious a regard for principles which are worthy of respect.

#### THE MODERN MOVEMENT

It has already been said that if art is to be a living force it must never lose touch with the spirit of the age to which it belongs and must be always prepared to adjust itself to changes in the popular point of view. All through its history it has been the medium through which period by period the instincts and the sentiments of humanity have been most effectively expressed. Certainly, the manner of this expression has varied greatly, but every variation has been in response to some demand which the artist could not resist; a demand, indeed, which he, having the same instincts and sentiments as his fellows, did not really wish to resist.

So when there have been changes in the popular point of view changes have followed, as a matter of course, in the art of the time. Sometimes these have been merely under the influence of a passing fashion and they have had no permanent effect; more often they have marked the progression from one stage of national development to another and have implied the abandonment of ideas which have ceased to represent the view of the people. Then they have had much significance as steps in the evolution of art which have carried it further in its progress from age to age and have added to its vitality and power.

But in observing movements of this sort it is always necessary to enquire whether they are evidence of a real advance or whether they are simply reflections of a momentary craze, and to see if they are in accordance with the general desire or nothing more than the agitations of some small clique. The best way to settle their importance is to analyse the motives which underlie them and to make sure that these motives are inspired by a real respect for the fundamental principles of art which have been accepted without serious question ever since art began. There are crazes and cliques—there have been many in the past and, no doubt, there will be many more in the future—which aim at upsetting the principles of art, but that they will ever succeed seems

hardly within the bounds of probability. Still, they have to be taken into account when the progress of art is being examined.

That is why even the most extravagant phases of what is called to-day the modern movement have to be considered. There can be no question about the existence of a world-wide intention to revise the art which has served us in the past and to bring it up to date, but for the most part the inclination has been towards a revision of practice rather than principles and the idea of reform has been limited to the elimination of weaknesses due to the failure of artists to adapt themselves to suddenly changed conditions of life. Certain groups, of which there are representatives in almost every country, wish, however, to prescribe in the place of this controlled and regulated amendment a volcanic upheaval of the very foundations of art and the erection of something totally different on the ground so cleared. That this is a very ambitious idea is not to be disputed, whether or not it has a chance of success is the point of interest.

For, hitherto, from the earliest times the basic principle of art has been the representation of nature with, at all events, a reasonable degree of fidelity. Even the artists of the Stone Age in their drawings on the walls of the caves in which they lived tried to depict things they knew or incidents they had seen. They were realists and illustrators, and the vast majority of artists since, whatever the convention they followed, tried to be realistic and illustrative too. In the archaic stages of art the effort to be true to nature was not, perhaps, very successful, but that was due to imperfect training of hand and eye, not to a belief that truth did not matter—nature was the source of inspiration then as it is now.

Is there any hope to-day for a movement which aims at the abandonment of naturalism? Can humanity after centuries of nature worship be induced to accept as art something in which nature is entirely disregarded or, at least, perverted and made ridiculous? If so drastic a reform were supported by a general demand which voiced a complete reversal of the popular faith, if it were promoted by an united body of believers in sincere agreement about the policy they ought to pursue, it might, perhaps, secure some measure of serious attention; as things are any value it might have is discounted by the conspicuous differences of opinion between the many small groups and coteries which talk most about it. One group says that the artist is concerned not at all with what he sees but only with what he feels, and that he must rely for inspiration solely upon his inner consciousness. Another admits the expediency of some reference to nature, but insists that all expression should be by means of a rigid decorative convention. Others, again,

talk about the recapture of the child-like vision and a reversion to archaic ingenuousness; and so it goes on through a succession of oddly assorted theorists whose only common ground is a dislike of stable conviction.

Each of these groups has, of course, its little band of lay followers who use an appropriate jargon when discussing the mysteries of their creed and assume postures of adoration before the productions of the artists in whom they profess to believe, but whether these followers are real converts or only sensation seekers who like to pose as superior to the common herd it is probably hardly worth while even to speculate. The point that matters is that they do not represent any large development of thought and that they are plainly exceptions to the general rule of stolid acceptance of recognised artistic principles.

For the purposes of argument it may be granted that they are sincere in their desire for the reformation of art, and that each of the cliques among which they are divided is honestly trying to discover a way of making the artist's expression of his æsthetic sense more efficient and more closely in accord with the needs of his time. sincerity and all this honesty of purpose must be inevitably wasted if the kind of reformation they advocate is not in spirit and practice what the mass of men actually want. That there is nowhere any unwillingness to accept reform is indicated by the universal unrest which, as has been said before, is affecting the world of art, an unrest which artists are justified in taking as a hint that through slackness or want of enterprise they have lost some of their hold upon the public. As, however, the artists who enjoy the widest popularity at the present time and are held in the highest esteem by all sorts and conditions of men are those who have put a more virile and progressive interpretation upon tradition rather than those who have broken aggressively with it, what is actually demanded would seem to fall very far short of the suggested revolution.

Consequently, the modern movement instead of reflecting the spirit of the age is actually out of touch with it and is, by the distractions it introduces, a hindrance to progress. It unsettles the plain man who resents being told by noisy cranks that his instincts are all wrong and that his ideas about art are prehistoric. It offends him by offering him stuff that he cordially dislikes and that he will not have at any price. It sets him wondering whether, if that is the sort of shape that art is going to assume, art can possibly be any concern of his at all. And it is the plain man, it must be remembered, the man of average intelligence and ordinary tastes, who is the mainstay of art in every country, not the occasional collector who craves for new excitements.

Again, slovenly modernism is a stumbling block in the path of the 16

student. When he sees men who claim to be accepted as masters flouting nature, abandoning knowledge of their craft, shirking all the difficulties of technical accomplishment, is it likely that he will trouble to master the mechanism of art? They are independent, so he will assert his independence from the start, though he is quite incapable of appreciating where this independence is going to lead him. They declare that the principles and traditions which were respected in the past have ceased to possess any authority: he interprets this as a license to run riot and to commit any folly that he pleases. What is likely to be his future?

If the movement is tested by reference to the past the absurdity of its claim to have produced anything better than the past has given us is put beyond question. No modern painter striving to express his emotions has approached the emotional quality of Turner, who by the aid of his inner consciousness translated his supremely exact observations of nature into abstractions that were as commandingly true as they were impressively imaginative. No follower of a decorative formula, labouring solely at pattern making, has any place in the company of masters like Velasquez, Titian, or Reynolds, who owe their rank in art quite as much to the magnificence of their design as to the nobility of their naturalism. No pretender to a child-like vision has in his affectation of simplicity attained a fraction of the sincerity which gave dignity to even the most primitive of the early Italian painters. these artists of bygone times were honest nature students doing the best of which they were capable without any delusion that they had a mission to change the whole aspect of art.

That is, indeed, the distinction which must be made between the great men of other days and the new type of agitator who would destroy what they built up. They thought about their art and sought for the best way to make it a worthy expression of the faith that was in them; he thinks about himself and casts around to find how he can most easily obtain notoriety. So long as he can plume himself on having created a sensation he is content; he does not care whether he does harm or good to art if only he succeeds in gaining by his eccentricity attention to which on his merits he can hardly pretend to be entitled. About the spirit of the age in which he lives he knows nothing, for he is in contact only with the little band of followers and imitators whom, as like flocks to like, he gathers round him and in whose parrot cries he imagines that he hears the voice of the people. In the delusion that he alone is helping on the evolution of art he can be left; there are among the illustrations in this book quite enough to show that real progress is being made without him.

#### EDITOR'S NOTE

The Editor desires to thank all those artists who have kindly given permission for the reproduction of their pictures, and to express his gratitude for facilities granted by the authorities of the National and the Tate Galleries, and the National Gallery of New South Wales, and also by Messrs. H. Bendixson, A. Diehl and Gruss, Capt. Langton Douglas, Frau Marg. Nagel, Mrs. G. Roberts, and Messrs. Lefèvre & Son and W. B. Paterson. He is also indebted for a picture in the collection of the late Leonard Borwick, Esq.

PLATE 1
"LA NOVIA"

BY HERMEN ANGLADA
(In the possession of A. Diehl, Esq.) SPAIN

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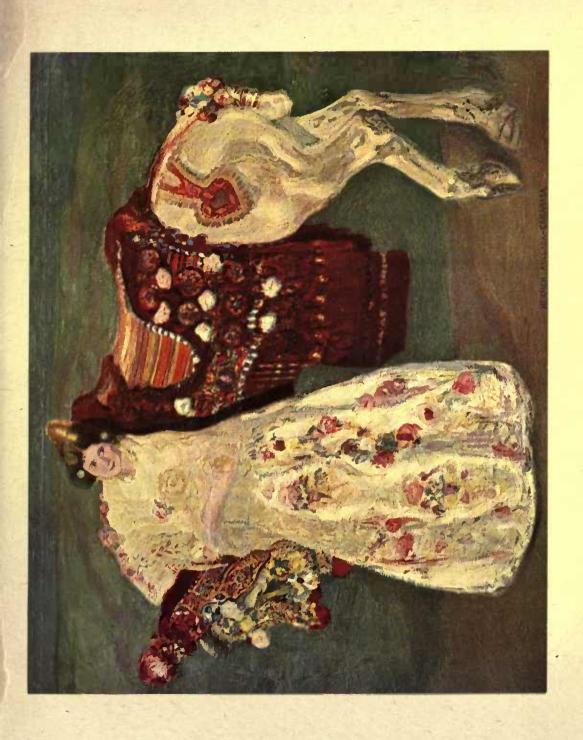




PLATE II
" THE FISHERWOMEN"
BY FRANK BRANGWYN, R.A.
(In the possession of Mrs. G. Roberts)

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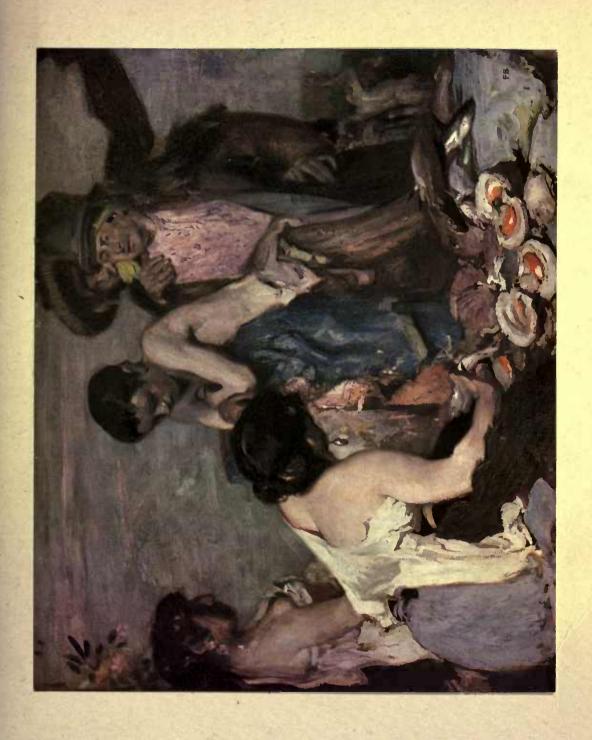




PLATE III
"THE BRIDE"
BY C. E. CHAMBERS

UNITED STATES OF AMERICA

PLATE III
"THE BRIDE"
BY C. E. CHAMBERS

UNITED STATES OF AMERICA

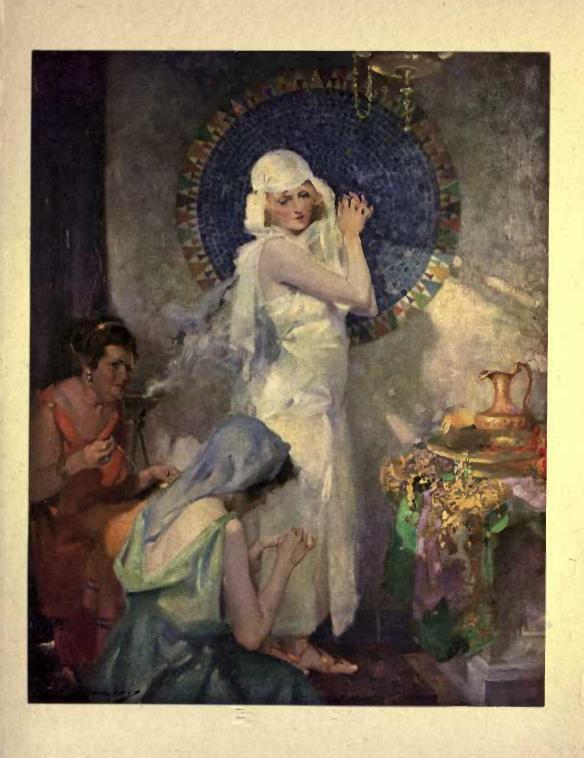




PLATE IV
"IEUNES SPARTIATES S'EXERCANTS À LA LUTTE "
BY E. DEGAS
(In the Tate Gallery)

FRANCE

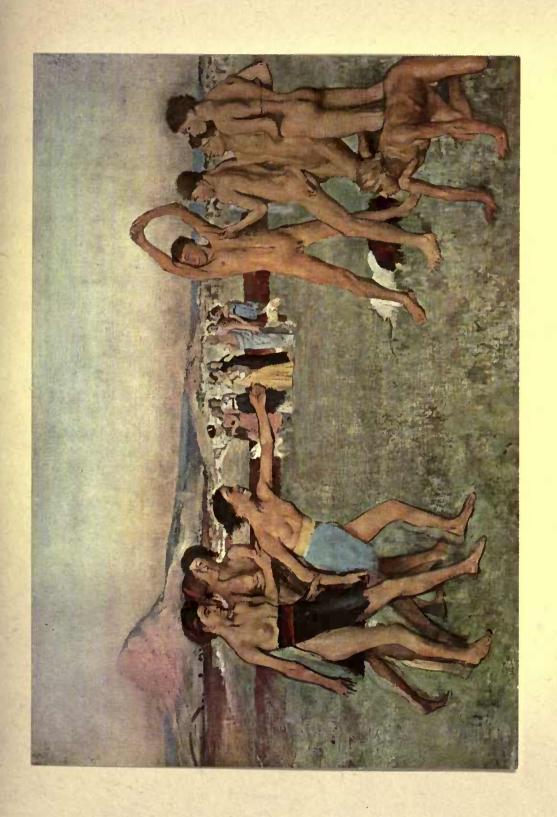
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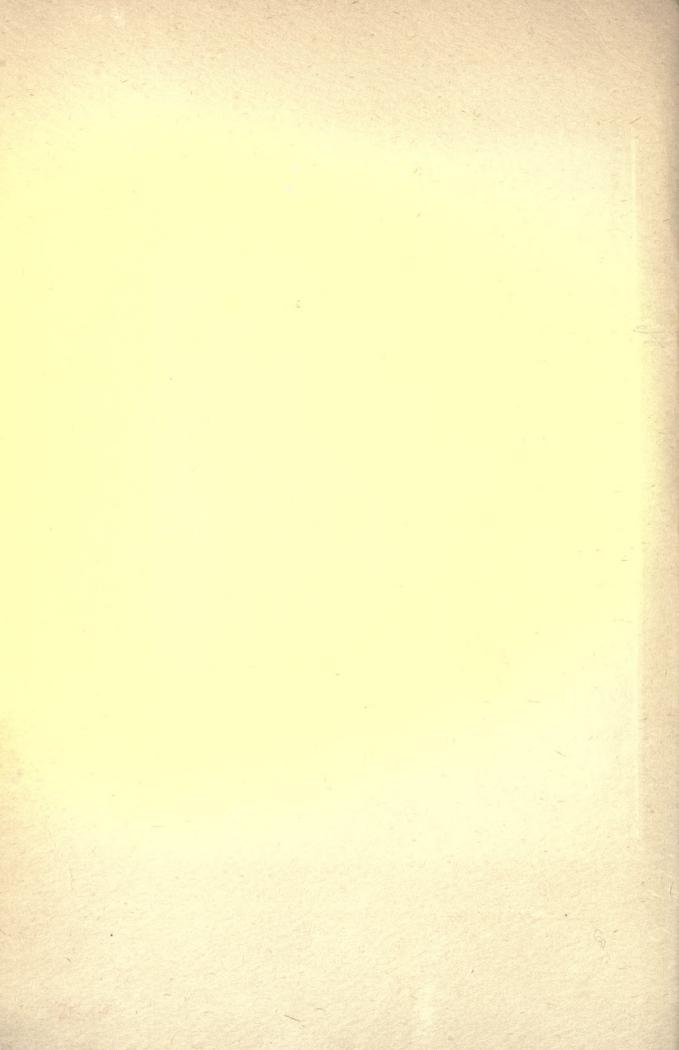


PLATE V

"DIE FISCHERIN"

BY JULIUS DIEZ

(In the possession of Herr Gruss)

By courtesy of the proprietors of "Die Kunst," Munich

GERMANY

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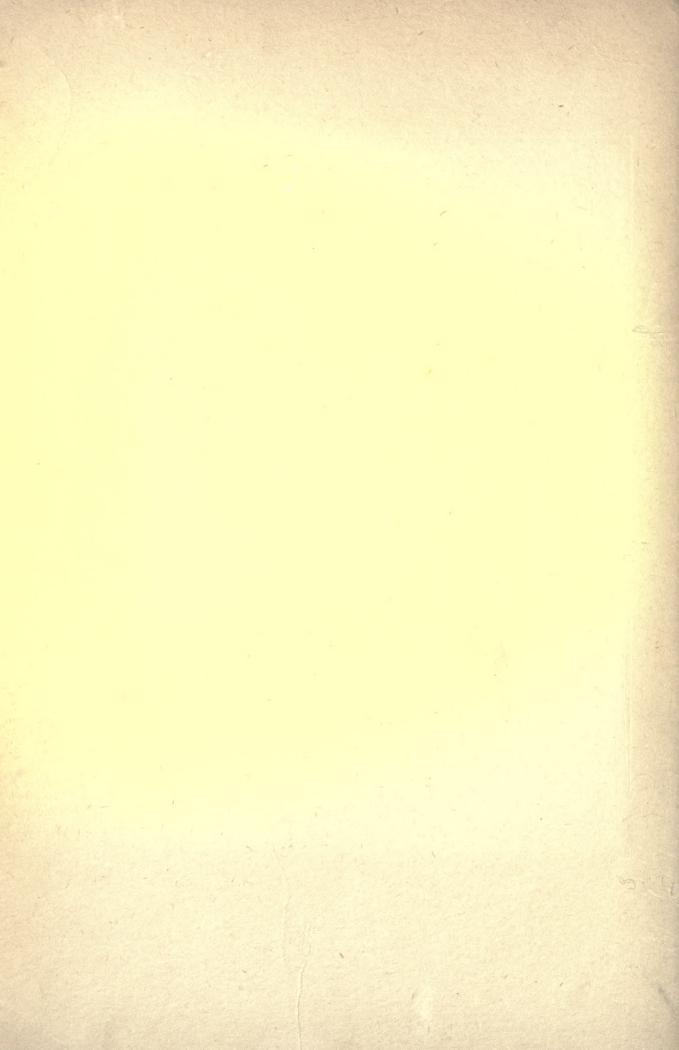
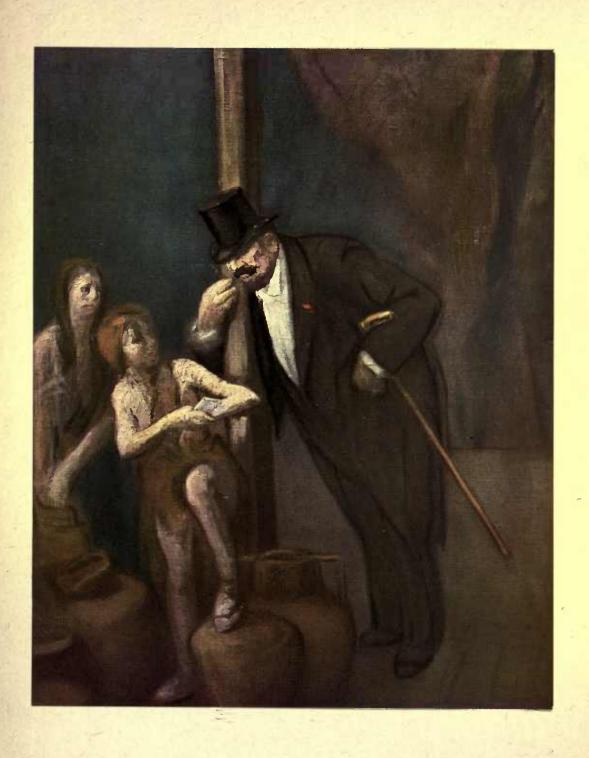


PLATE VII " DANSEUSE ET ABONNÉ " BY J. L. FORAIN

FRANCE

PLATE VII "DANSEUSE ET ABONNÉ" BY J. L. FORAIN FRANCE

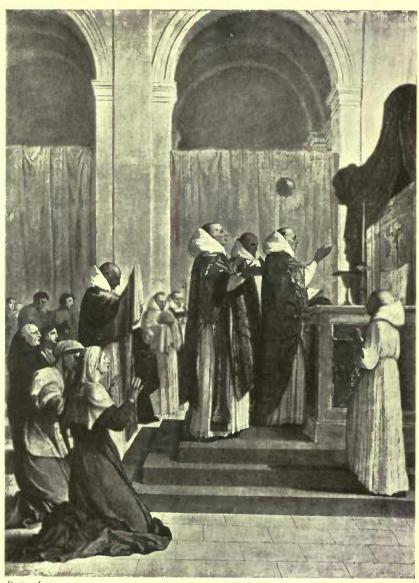






Avignon. Musee Calvet

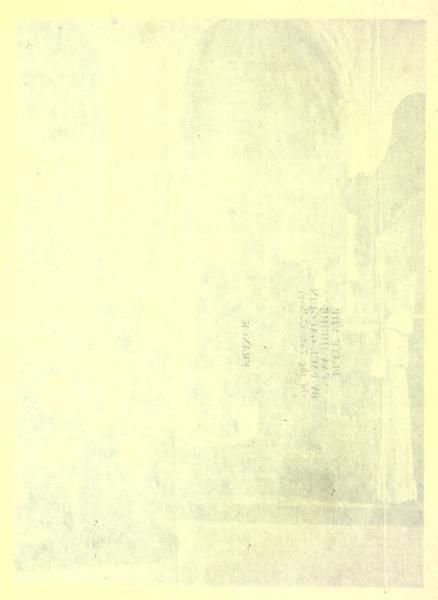
LOUIS LE NAIN. Portrait of a Nun.



Paris. Louvre

EUSTACHE LE SUEUR. The Mass of St. Martin of Tours.

PLATE VIII
"FAA IHEIHE"
BY PAUL GAUGUIN
(In the Tate Gallery) FRANCE



... Various Torres



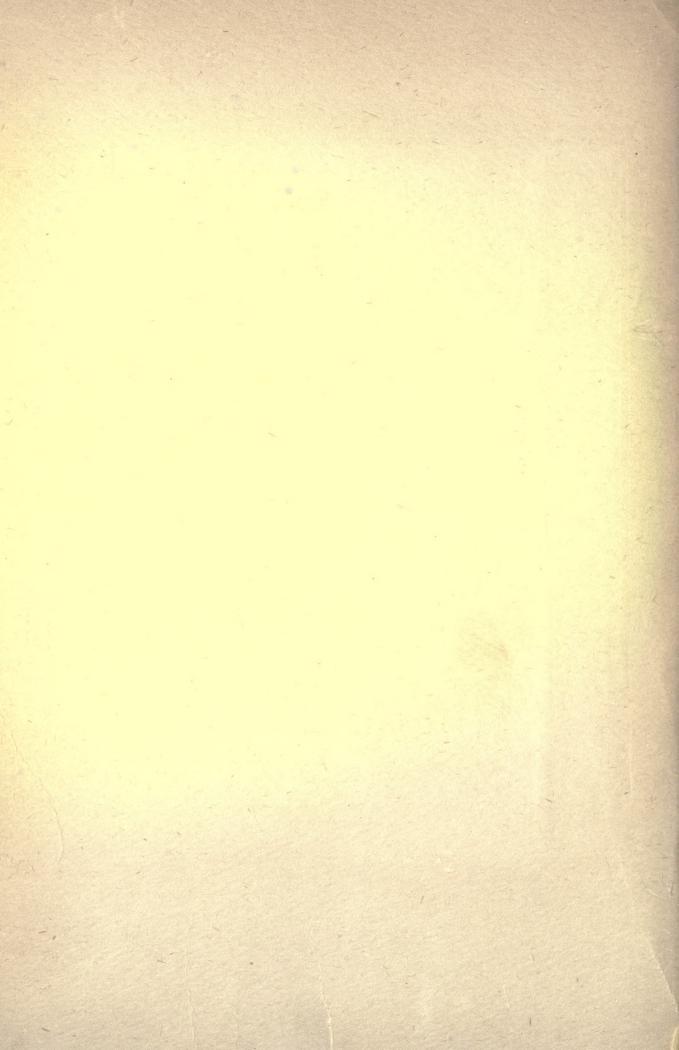


PLATE IX
"FIRELIGHT"
BY W. G. DE GLEHN, A.R.A.

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"FIRELIGHT"
BY W. G. DE GLEHN, A.R.A.



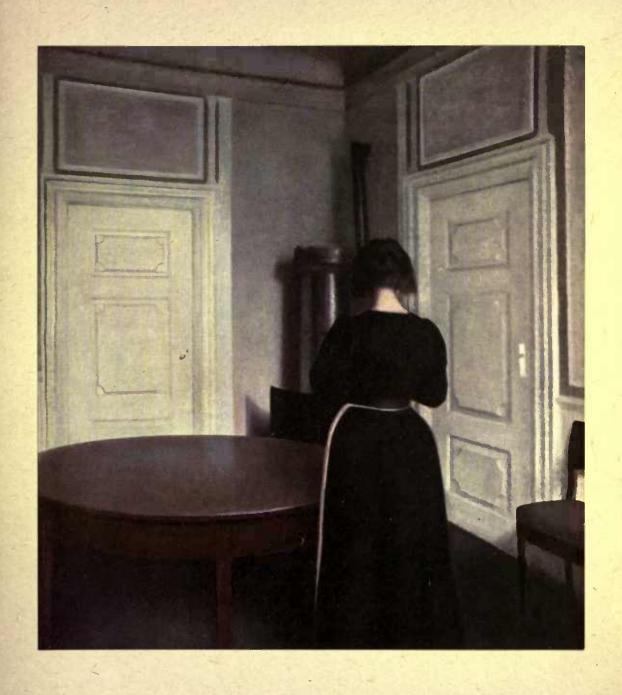


PLATE X
"TOURNEZ S'IL VOUS PLAÎT"
BY VILHELM HAMMERSHÖJ
By courtesy of L. Borwick, Esq.

DENMARK

PLATE X
"TOURNEZ S'IL VOUS PLAÎT"
BY VILHELM HAMMERSHOJ
By courlesy of L. Herwick, Esq.

DENMARK



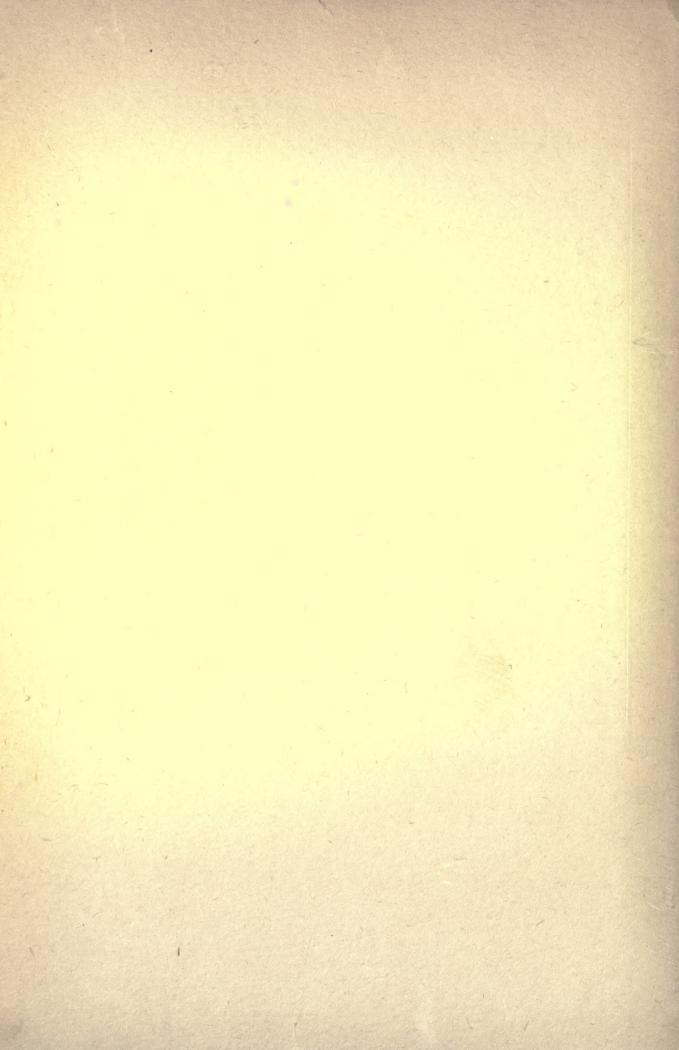


PLATE XI
"PORTRAIT OF MADAME SUGGIA"
BY AUGUSTUS JOHN, A.R.A.
(In the Tate Gallery)

"PORTRAIT OF MADAME SUGGEA"

BY AUGUSTUS JOHN, A.R.A.
(In the Tate Gallery)





PLATE XII

"DIE BEIDEN SCHWESTERN"

BY ARTHUR KAMPF

(In the possession of Frau Marg. Nagel)

GERMANY

PEATE AND SCHWESTERN BY ARTHUR KAMPE (In the possession of Fran Mary Name)

GERMANY





PLATE XIII
"ARTIST AND MODEL"
BY LAURA KNIGHT, A.R.W.S.

PLATE XIII
"ARTIST AND MODEL"
BY LAURA ENIGHT, AR W.S.

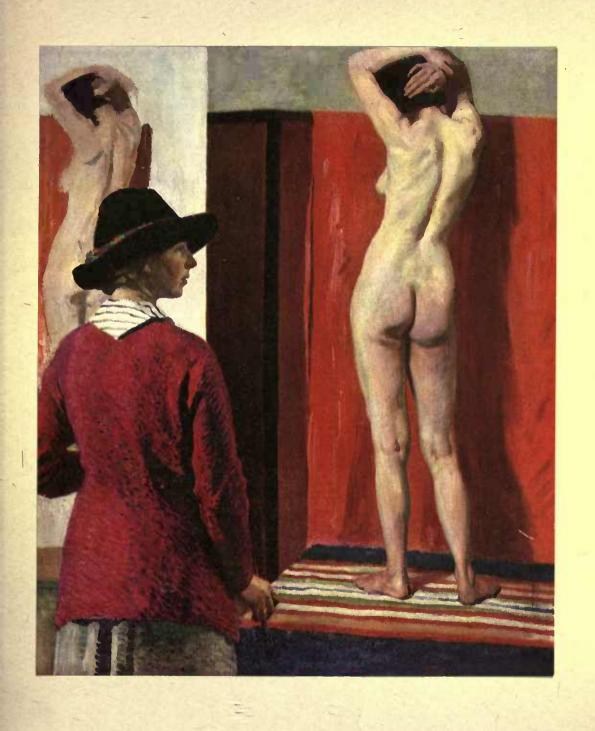




PLATE XIV
PART OF FRESCO "MEDICAL HERB"
BY KOSUGI-MISUI

JAPAN

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PART OF FRESCO "MEDICAL HERB:"
BY KOSUGI-MISUI

JAPAN



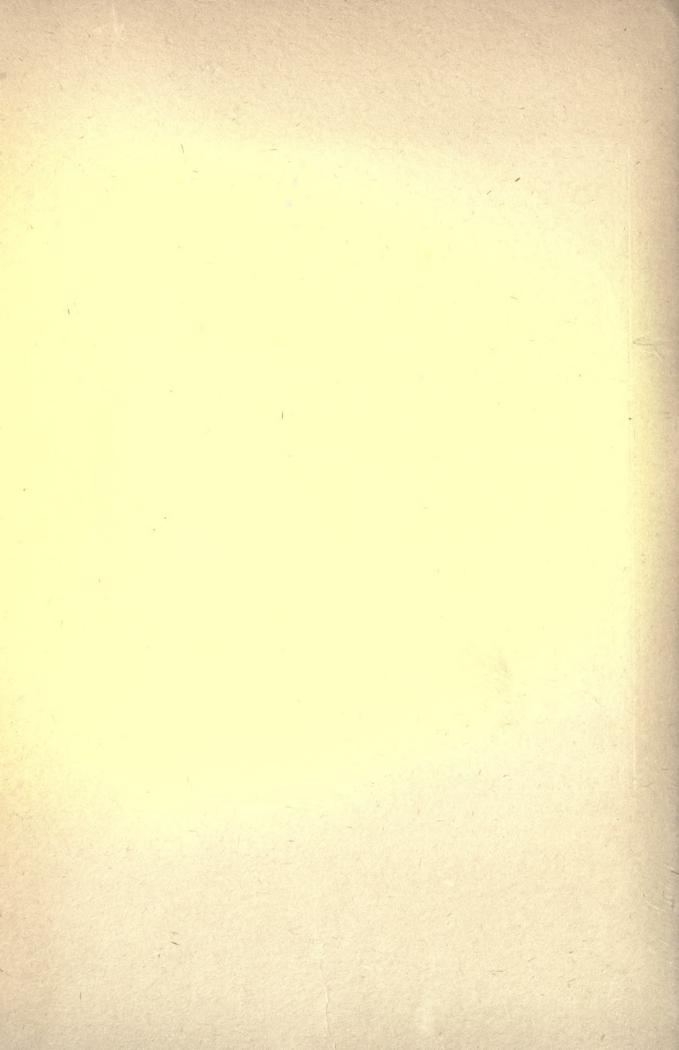


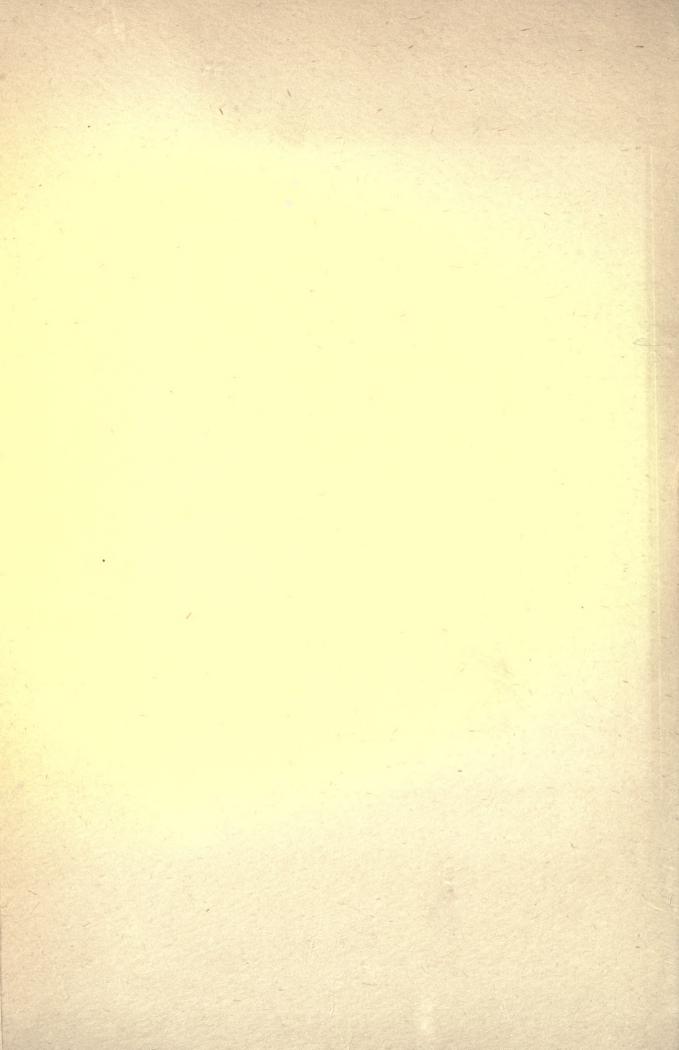
PLATE XV
"LA DOUANE"
BY ANTONIO MANCINI
(In the Tate Gallery)

ITALY

PLATE XV
" LA DOUANE "
BY ANTONIO MANCINI
(In the Tate Gallery)

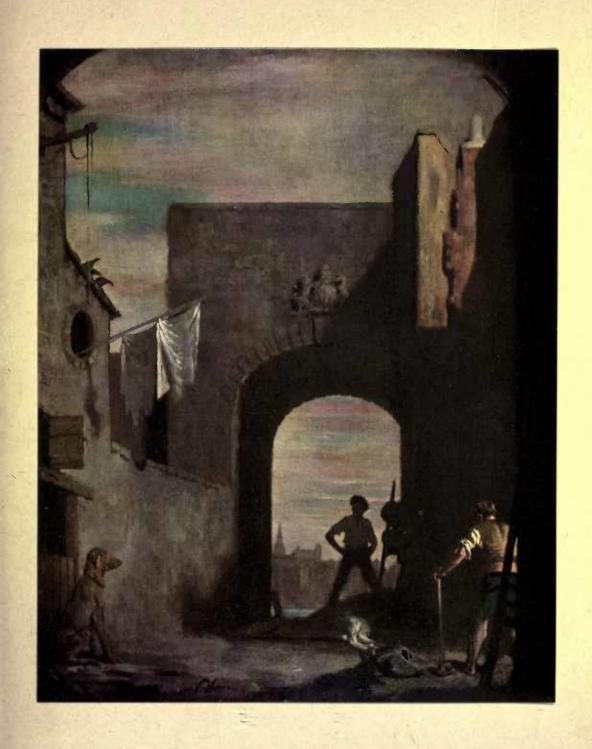
TAL.Y





"THE KNACKER'S YARD"
BY SIR WILLIAM ORPEN, R.A.
(In the possession of Capt. R. Langton Douglas)

PLATE XVI
"THE KNACKER'S YARD"
BY SIR WHILLIAM ORPEN, R.A.
(In the possession of Capt. R. Langton Douglas)



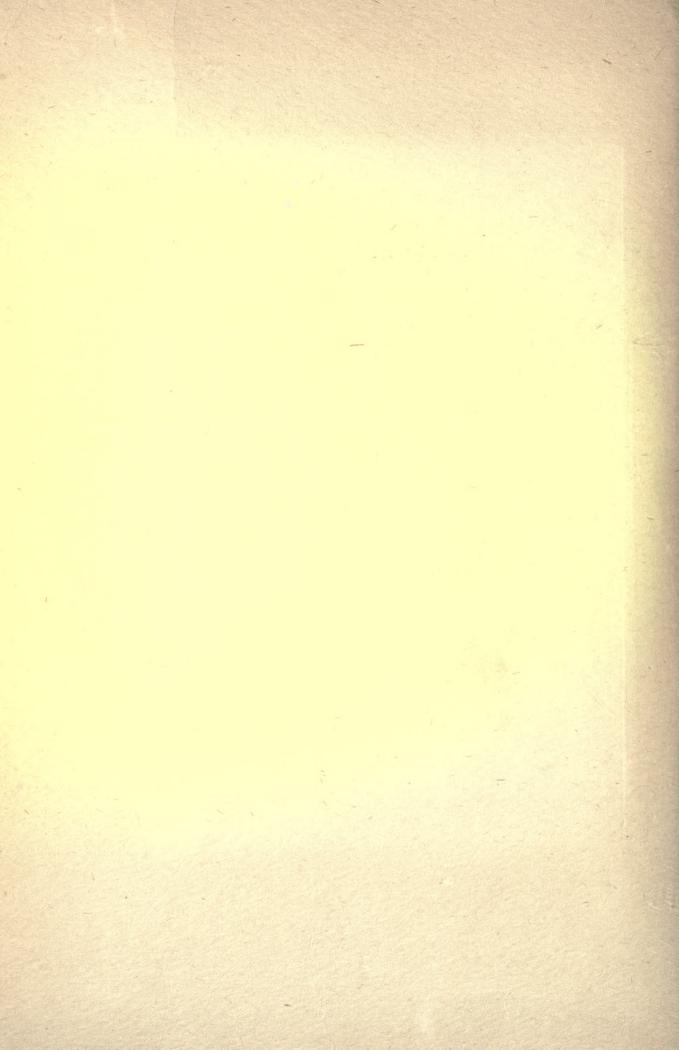


PLATE XVII
"PENELOPE AND THE LOVERS"
BY GLYN W. PHILPOT, R.A.

PLATE XVII PENELOPE AND THE LOVERS " BY GLYN W. PHILPOT, R.A.

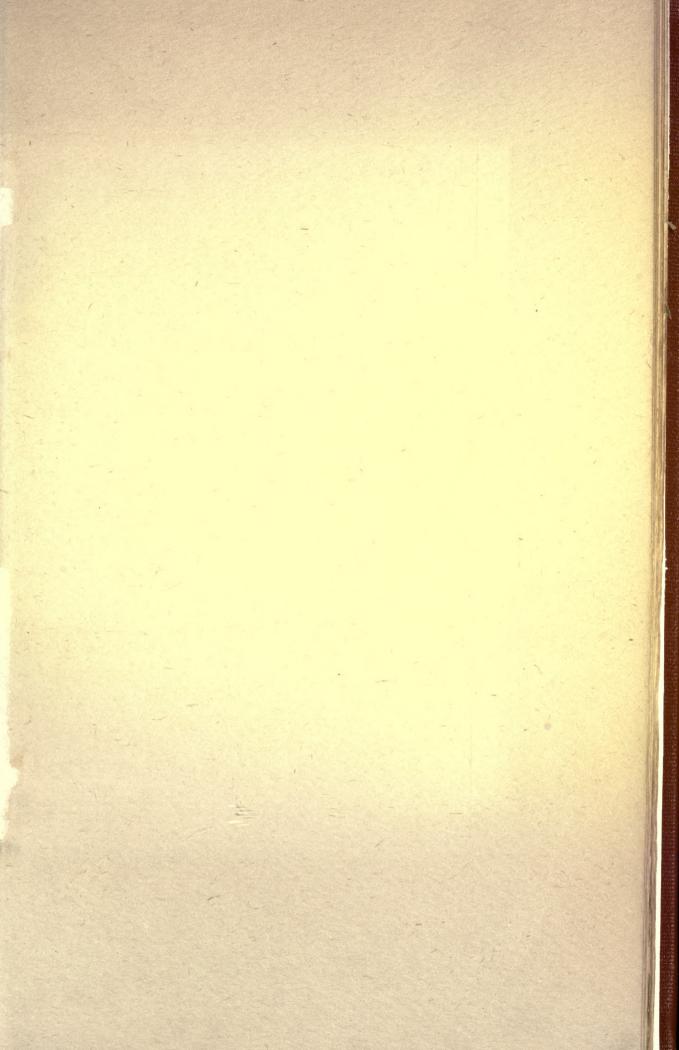




PLATE XVIII
"SEWING THE SAIL"
BY ALESSANDRO POMI
By courtesy of Messrs, H, S, Lefèvre & Son

ITALY

PLATE XVIII
" SEWING THE SAIL."
BY ALESSANDRO POMI
By courtesy of Messrs. H. S. Lefèvre & Son

ITALY

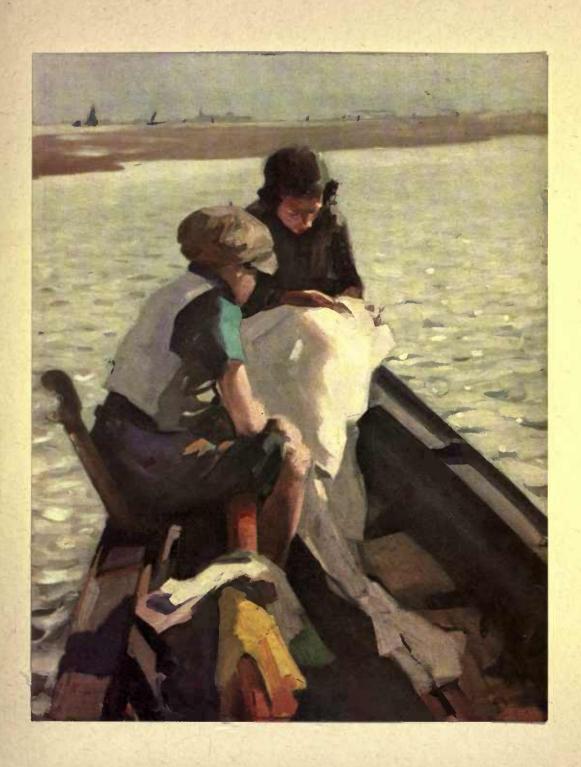




PLATE XIX RAAGNI "AASAORI" BY FYZEE RAHAMIN

INDIA

PLATE ALX RAAGMI "LASAGEL" DV EVZEE RAHAMAN

-ARGIVI

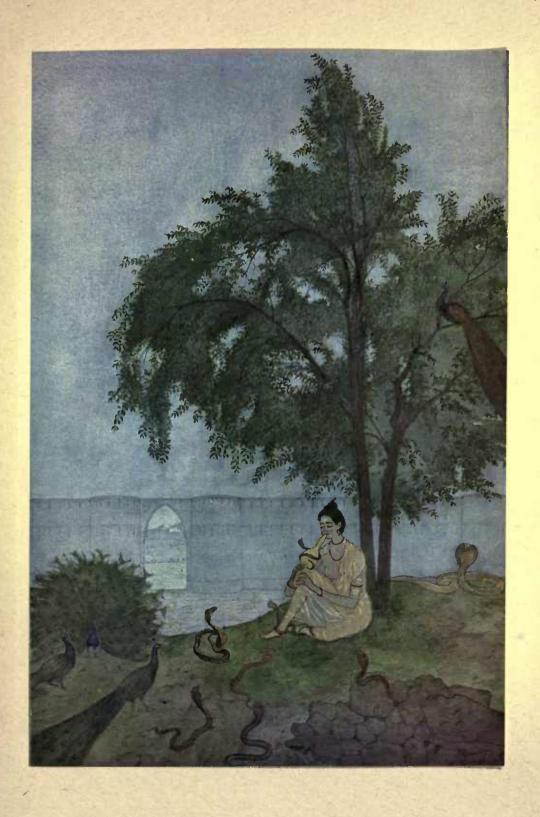




PLATE XX

"ENA AND BETTY, DAUGHTERS OF ASHER WERTHEIMER"
BY J. S. SARGENT, R.A.
(In the National Gallery)

UNITED STATES OF AMERICA

PLATE NA PETTY, DAL GHTERS OF ASHER WITCHPLINER BY J. S SARGENT, R.A. (In the Value of Sales)

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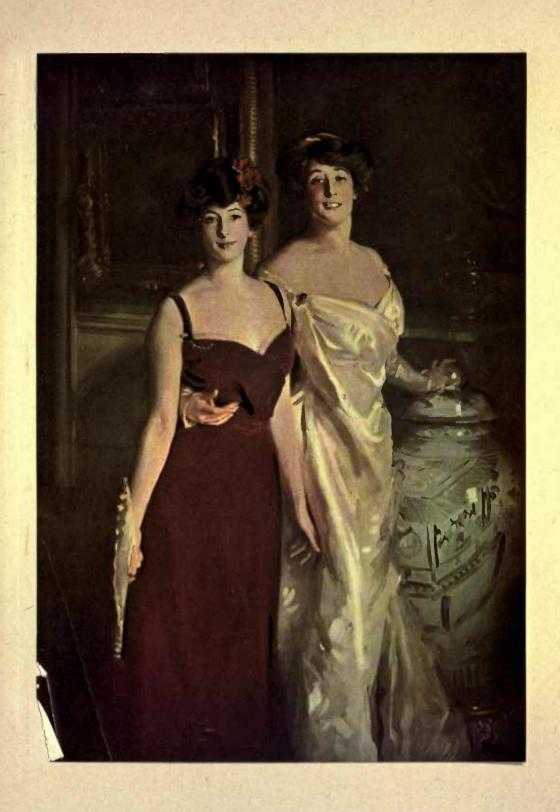




PLATE XXI
"RUSSIAN BALLET"
BY LEON DE SMET

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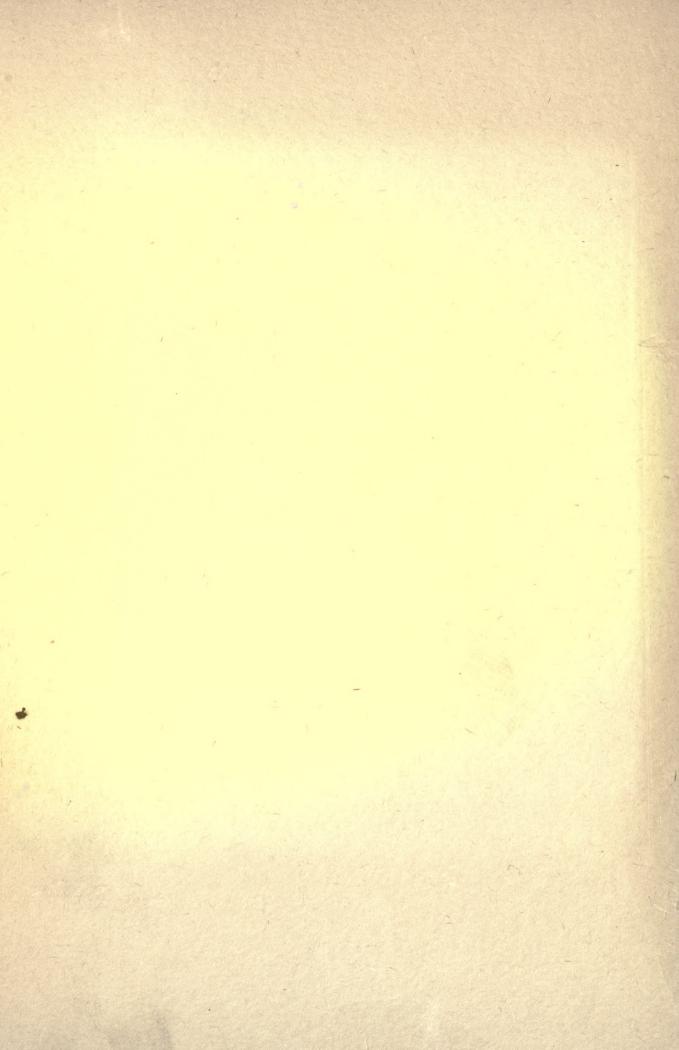


PLATE XXII
"LA DANSEUSE"
BY SAVELY SORINE

RUSSIA

PLATE XXII "LA DANSEUSE " BY SAVELY SORINE

RUSSIA





PLATE XXIII
"THE COCK FIGHT",
BY ROLAND STRASSER
By courtesy of W. B. Paterson, Esq. AUSTRIA

PLATE XXIII
"THE COCK FIGHT"
BY ROLAND STRASSER
By courtesy of W B. Paterson, £sq. AUSTRIA

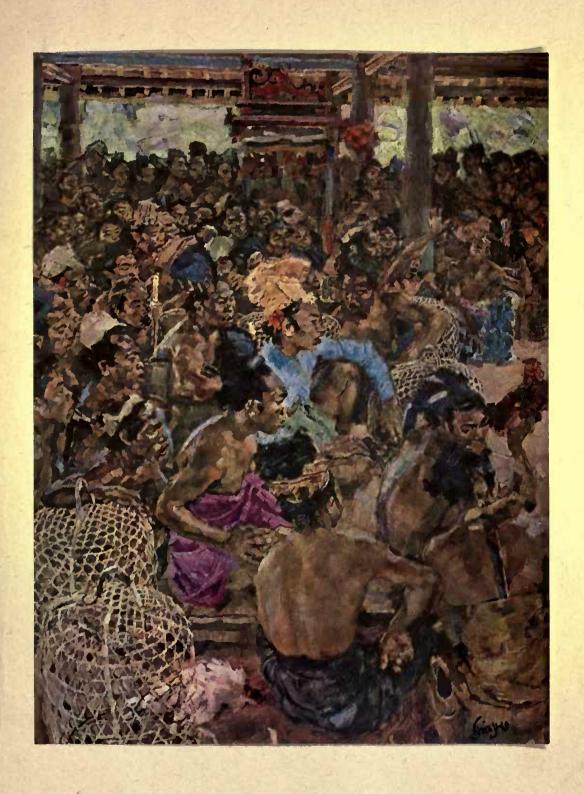




PLATE XXIV

"A DALECARLIAN GIRL"

BY ANDERS ZORN

(In the possession of H. Bendixson, Esq.)

SWEDEN

PLATE XXIV

"A DALECARLIAN GIRL"

BY ANDERS ZORN

(In the possession of H. Bendixson, Esq.)

SWEDEN





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